

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge

Volunteer Newsletter

July 2013



What's New?



What's New? Babies of course! Hot summer days are here to stay in Utah this summer and the Refuge is no different. But what's exciting is that there are many newly hatched birds growing fast all over the Refuge. Avocets chicks, pictured at left, are almost as large as their parents. While, grebe parents give 'grebey-back' rides and pelican parents travel ~60 miles per day to catch fish at the refuge and bring it back to hungry babies at Gunnison Island in the Great Salt Lake. Visitors have been showing off photos of tiny Wilson's phalaropes being tended by a doting father and Virginia rails have been spotted foraging along the rushes with their little 'shadows'.

Thumbs-Up!

Our Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) crew started on June 17th and they are doing a **fantastic job!** These six local youth, being led by Andrea Johnson and Nicole Prescott with a little help from all the staff. The crew members are: Ruben Davila, youth leader, Gloria Hammond, youth leader, Emily Bradford, Kayla Bass, Jordan Merrill and Spencer Schow. So far the YCC crew has completed many tasks including removing fence, updating the amphitheater and cleaning the flumes, which allow water to enter the Refuge's grassland units. Plus, they help to keep the Refuge looking good by washing vehicles and removing invasive phragmites plants at the Education Center, cleaning bathrooms, and picking up trash. YCC crew pictured at right with Leave No Trace Master Educator Craig Allen, front center.



Refuge Roundup

Goose Banding Report: Special report from Brian Ferguson "June 12 was the first round of the annual goose roundup on the refuge. This program is the State Division of Wildlife Resources effort to band geese in northern Utah. It is truly a partnership effort between the State and US Fish and Wildlife Service to monitor goose movements through this flyway. State employees, Refuge staff and volunteers, and other volunteers from the public including members of Ducks Unlimited and dedicated waterfowl hunters joined in on this effort. This is the time when adult geese are molting and are not able to fly and the young of this year have not developed flight feathers. Four air boats were used with an operator and four crew members to catch the geese and transport them back to a central location for banding and data recording. Hanging over the front of an airboat as it speeds along its way and grabbing geese out of the water is rather an invigorating experience. One hundred geese were delivered to the



banding sight and after the required information was taken (age and sex) they were released back to the wild. There were a number of geese that had been previously banded and their band information was recorded. This information goes into a data base where managers can track where they were banded, recaptured and if they are harvested during the waterfowl season, the band information would give managers an idea of movement and how long they have been in the wild. One of the State employees commented that a bird captured earlier this season had been banded 15 years prior. This is one of those projects that really makes volunteering really exciting, thanks to all that participated!" **Thanks to Brian Ferguson for this great inside look at banding!**

The New Bridge! The first leg of the Auto Tour is getting a facelift, funding has come through to replace our water control structure on the L-line canal. Project will progress throughout summer and require much staff time. June consisted of pumping to drain the canal, beginning to remove old structure with heavy equipment and delivery of materials. July begins construction phase with expected completion this fall. Once finished, the structure will be much safer.



Water Conditions As you know the Bear River is running well below seasonal flow rates. Refuge staff is moving water to maintain high priority units. However, keep in mind that high temperatures are evaporating water quickly elsewhere. Visitors will likely begin to see carp stranded by the extremely low water conditions. Although unsightly, the carp provide an important food source for many Refuge Wetland birds.

Volunteer Happenings

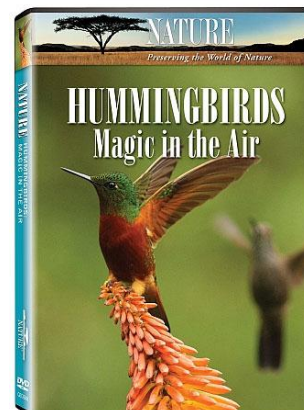


The front desk phone is ringing! All general phone calls are now being directed to the front desk. More information is available at the front desk or ask Katie. Kathi will be gone until July 29th. Thank you for all your help!

Great fun and learning was had by all at the CPR training in June taught by Greg Mullen. Volunteers, staff, and even some family members spent the day learning CPR and first aid. Greg kept the group engaged, laughing, and most importantly, learning about how to save lives in an emergency. Thank you Greg!

Free Film; in July Join us Saturdays in July at 1:00pm, and enjoy a wildlife film in the air conditioned, large-screen auditorium. Family-friendly and FREE!

- July 13: "The Problems of Parenthood" 52 minutes.
- July 20: "The Beauty of Ugly" 55 minutes
- July 27: "Hummingbirds: Magic in the Air" 73 minutes.



Mark Your Calendars and Save the Dates!

- Tuesday, July 24: **We are OPEN for Pioneer Day**
- Friday, August 9: **YCC Presentation/Luncheon**
- Friday, August 30: **Amateur Photo Contest Entry Deadline**

News from the AVOCET CORNER BOOKSTORE!

The 2013-2014 **Federal Duck Stamps** will be available Friday, June 28, 2013. Of the \$15 price tag, \$14.70 goes directly toward purchase or habitat restoration of land for the benefit of wildlife. Wing on over to the Avocet Corner Bookstore and buy yours today.

And YES! T-shirts & hats are finally in!

